

**Title of Session:** Classroom Assessment

**Moderator:** BJ Berquist

**Title of File:** 20071108assessment

**Date:** November 8, 2007

Room: Classroom Assessment Group

**BjB:** let's start with introductions. Please tell me where you are located and what you teach or hope to teach

**BjB:** I teach remedial communication in Pennsylvania

**LaurenWB:** I'm in Virginia, I teach high school English

**BjB:** and will try to fill in for Maryann until she gets here

**JiaYuL** joined the room.

**LukeAH:** Virginia Beach I'm a computer resource specialist for princess anne middle school

**CandaceD:** I teach Algebra and Alg/Geometry prep in West Virginia

**MarciaBe:** I teach business statistics and computer applications in Florida and it's beautiful today :-)

**KimMB:** I'm in VA, too. I believe Lauren and I are in the same class at UMW! I teach 6th grade science.

**RaymondG:** I'm in Texas and will be eventually be teaching English and Latin

**BjB:** so all of you will eventually need or already use assessments in some form, right?

**RaymondG:** yes

**CandaceD:** yes

**LukeAH:** yes

**MarciaBe:** yes

**LaurenWB:** yes

**ElissaM** joined the room.

**KimMB:** yes

**BjB :** what do you feel is the most important reason to do assessments?

**BjB :** welcome, Elissa

**ElissaM:** Thanks

**LukeAH:** to identify strengths and weaknesses

**CandaceD:** I think that one of the important reasons for assessment is to guide my instruction. Assessing the students lets me know what skills they have mastered and what skills they are still struggling with.

**LaurenWB :** yeah...it helps determine mastery of material and what needs remediation so the students don't get too far behind

**ElissaM:** I think that the most important thing about assessments are to see students strengths and weaknesses and their progression.

**RaymondG:** they also help teachers create a "game plan" in getting all the students to understand the lesson

**BjB** smiles...good start! So you are assessing both the students and your teaching

**LaurenWB :** yes, I try to do that

**BjB :** can you say more about the game plan, Raymond?

**LukeAH:** I try to consider both, yes

**ElissaM:** After assessing a teacher can plan for each individual student and create lessons that can benefit everyone.

**KimMB:** I do both, yes.

**LaurenWB :** it does aid in differentiation

**BjB :** the buzzword lately is differentiating...

**MarciaBe:** I don't do tests, we have Celebrations of Knowledge were they can show off what they know. Some have more to celebrate than others.

**KimMB:** Pre-assessment for differentiation is all the buzz right now in my county.

**BjB** winks at Lauren

**RaymondG:** It all has to do with learning styles. A teacher needs to find a way to balance all the styles and not do the traditional audio/visual

**BjB:** and what about teaching styles? Are teachers allowed to have that luxury any more?

**RaymondG:** Another good use of assessments are in regards to the Gifted and Talented or Honors Programs

**LaurenWB:** well with the huge emphasis on standardization and standardized testing, it sure feels like we don't have the luxury of having our own style anymore

**LukeAH:** my primary job is to incorporate technology into the lessons of the teachers at my school and I find technology offers man alternatives to the traditional audio/visual

**RaymondG:** well I know when I do get the chance to teach the students, I have different activities which try to satisfy the different styles

**ElissaM:** I think that it is healthy for you and the class to change up teaching styles but in the upper grades it is hard to not teach to the standardized tests

**MarciaBe:** Can you do the same assessment criteria for different styles?

**BjB:** is there only one way to teach to the standardized tests?

**BjB** wonders if anyone has an answer for Marcia's question

**CandaceD:** no, you can teach the concept that is going to be on the test in many different ways

**RaymondG:** I agree with Candace there

**ElissaM:** No there are many ways to take what is on the test and turn it into something that is fun and can motivate students

**LukeAH:** but time is always an issue!

**LaurenWB:** I think in a lot of ways it depends on what you teach

**BjB:** oh, cool, Candace and Elissa.

**MarciaBe:** I understand teaching to different styles, I was wondering if we could have different 'versions' of the assessment based on styles

**BjB** sighs..yes, Luke, time is an issue

**BjB** looks around the room to see if anyone can answer Marcia's question

**LaurenWB**: I like the idea of different assessments, esp those that appeal to multiple intelligences, but my county at least is really going for common assessments for all ability levels

**CandaceD**: I think that you can have different styles of assessment for the same skill

**KimMB**: Sure you can have different assessments.

**ElissaM**: I'm sure you could but you are assessing the same material just changing the way in which you teach it so what you are assessing would be the same

**LaurenWB**: so that makes difficult

**KimMB**: Different children want to show us their knowledge in different ways. Kids are standardized.

**MarciaBe**: Boy, it all takes more time, doesn't it?

**BjB**: a new four letter word? NCLB

**KimMB**: Whoops...AREN'T standardized.

**RaymondG**: maybe the teacher could teach the student how to reinterpret the questions on a test to cater to their own styles.

**BjB**: ahhh...test taking skills

**MarciaBe**: Could we share the criteria with them and ask them how they would show they accomplished it?

**BjB**: I wonder what the students would come up with, Marcia!

**CandaceD**: I bet they would come up with some pretty creative ways to demonstrate their learning

**BjB**: o O ( and at what age/grade would this be appropriate )

**LaurenWB**: I would love to be able to use something like that

**JiaYuL**: yes, too younger may not be suitable

**BjB**: what about portfolios?

**BjB**: or brochures or posters?

**MarciaBe:** For younger children you might offer a variety of choices for older ones let them come up with the choices (video, audio, presentation, test, paper, etc.)

**BjB:** or a book?

**BjB:** ahh...or a video!

**MarciaBe:** A digital book?

**JiaYuL:** cool~

**BjB** smiles. Wouldn't that be fun!

**LaurenWB:** I'd love to let them write alternate endings to the stories we read, or make their own movie versions

**LaurenWB:** we did that once in my hs AP English class and I loved it

**MarciaBe:** Wouldn't they love that?!

**BjB** nods..and what about digital storytelling?

**LukeAH:** people in our district are using blogs to do just that

**JiaYuL:** when I practiced in kindergarten..there children were eager to do that..

**ShayneTr** joined the room.

**ElissaM:** Well I am currently student teaching in kindergarten and we are learning about spiders. One way that my students could show me that they understand the spider parts is creating a model of a spider out of food or items around the house hold. When they bring it in they can present it and name each part. This would show that they know their parts and would be proud of the work that they accomplished

**BjB:** hi, Shayne

**ShayneTr:** Hi

**LaurenWB:** letting them pick their own assessment gives them more of a personal investment and desire to do well

**LaurenWB:** it's so much more meaningful than a scantron

**BjB** pictures the children eating their edible spider parts...blech

**MarciaBe:** After training in the corporate world, they don't usually take a test; they demonstrate they know by doing something - by being more productive at what their responsibilities are. If someone tracks that, isn't that assessment, too?

**ElissaM:** It was lovely. There was chocolate everywhere!

**MarciaBe:** Could someone else write a song or play about spiders?

**BjB:** good point, Marcia

**BjB:** nothing like real life experiences to weed out the people who don't achieve learning

**RaymondG:** Our Latin final, my senior year in HS was any project, I wrote poetry about famous emperors, others did plays, and some sculpted and made mosaics

**LaurenWB:** yeah...not enough emphasis is placed on practical knowledge

**RaymondG:** as long as it incorporated what we had learned

**LaurenWB:** that sounds cool Raymond

**MarciaBe:** It sounds like that was memorable to you, Raymond.

**RaymondG:** it was, first time I had ever written poetry in dactylic hexameter and in Latin.

**JeffC** joined the room.

**BjB** nods...and very practical...now Raymond can read poetry in Latin ;-)

**BjB** wonders if Raymond has much need to do that?

**LukeAH:** what the heck is dactylic hexameter?

**BjB** waves hi to Jeff

**RaymondG:** well I hope to teach Latin soon, so yes

**BjB:** Just teasing, Raymond ;-)

**MarciaBe:** Did anyone read Teacher Man where Frank McCourt had them reading and singing and playing music to recipes? That was pretty cool.

**BjB:** Wow, and you have lots of positive ways in which to assess your students. Great, Raymond

**BjB** nods. Good book

**BjB** wonders if there are more structured ways in which to assess.

**LukeAH**: rubrics

**BjB** : oh, nice, Luke

**MarciaBe**: I've started doing online quizzes with feedback on their answers for reviews.

**BjB** : sounds good, Marcia

**MarciaBe**: That has helped the students

**LaurenWB** : I give several different options for short answers and essays...that way they can demonstrate writing skill on a topic they're comfortable with

**BjB** : why do you think it was helpful, Marcia?

**MarciaBe**: I think because it wasn't graded and they got immediate feedback.

**LaurenWB** : so no pressure...that's a good idea

**BjB** . o O ( we're also talking short term and long term assessment )

**ShayneTr**: Checklist of skills applied (eg. for computer class)

**ElissaM**: Personally I like to have checklists with comment sections. Just to see if a student is accomplishing what they are supposed to and any feedback that will be needed later

**CandaceD**: I think anytime you can give immediate feedback the students benefit

**JiaYuL**: I also tried role play

**BjB** : can you tell us more about that, JiaYu?

**MarciaBe**: What do you teach, JiaYuL?

**LukeAH**: I agree Candace...immediate feedback is a plus. especially w/ lower functioning students.

**CandaceD**: it helps them analyze and fix their own mistakes

**JiaYuL**: I am a graduate stu. now...I practiced in kindergarten before.

**MarciaBe:** I have used Quia.com to create the online quizzes.

**LukeAH:** has anyone tried the quiz maker in united streaming?

**LukeAH:** unitedstreaming.com

**MarciaBe:** No, is it free?

**BjB:** [www.unitedstreaming.com](http://www.unitedstreaming.com)

**BjB:** hold down the ctrl key on your keyboard when you click on the url

**BjB:** or turn off pop up blockers

**ShayneTr:** There's also Hot Potatoes

**LukeAH:** yeah, [www.unitedstreaming.com](http://www.unitedstreaming.com) i'm not sure if it's free to everyone. our school district works w/ a company called WHRO that owns it I think

**LaurenWB:** I like United Streaming for the videos but I didn't know you could make quizzes on it

**BjB:** anyone use webquests?

**MarciaBe:** I got Carol Duvall's craft pages with hotpotatoes. com

**LukeAH:** webquests, yes

**BjB:** <http://www.4teachers.org/> has quite a few free assessment tools

**ElissaM:** Since I am in kindergarten I have not made any quizzes. I just assess and observe their work that they do during math centers and literacy centers.

**BjB:**

<http://www.4teachers.org/profdev/index.php?profdev=as&PHPSESSID=b9455b8cc08ad2855179e3d64f83e2d8>

**BjB:** that is the assessment page for 4Teachers

**MarciaBe:** Thanks for the resources. Louis Schmier at <http://therandomthoughts.edublogs.org/> uses observation for grades in college and it works for him.

**LukeAH:** anyone use an online resource called skills tutor (myskillstutor.com) which provides a tutoring environment for teachers to use w/ 1 or several students at a time, generates reports for data driven decision making. We just started w/ it and I like it



**MarciaBe:** It's another new one for me.

**BjB:** <http://myskillstutor.com/login.jsp>

**BjB:** something that you might want to try if you can log in to TI from school is the K-12 Student Campus

**KimMB:** It sounds familiar. I think I've used it somewhere along the way.

**ElissaM:** That sounds great. My school just got this new program that teachers can give assignments or quizzes and students can login at any time even from home and complete the work.

**LaurenWB:** my school system is working on something similar

**BjB:** the teacher creates the classroom and assigns usernames and passwords to the students

**ElissaM:** I will have to find the name out. It is new and seems to be a great program

**BjB:** when the students log in they land in the classroom where they can engage in real time text chats, work in small groups, and post reflective writing to the threaded discussion boards

**RaymondG:** wow

**BjB:** the transcripts are sent to the teacher and a good assessment tool

**CandaceD:** that sounds pretty awesome, it's also something the kids would enjoy doing

**LukeAH:** this is all at k12 student campus?

**JiaYuL:** yeah, now my graduate teacher assess me on this way..

**ElissaM:** Yes it is like that. It really is a great program for older students who spend most of their time on the computer anyway.

**BjB:** Jeff Cooper leads a session on the K-12 student campus every Saturday

**ElissaM:** at a pre-k through 5th grade campus

**ShayneTr:** Would you give a grade for participation in these chats? How?

**BjB:** the K-12 Student Campus in Tapped In is free to all members

**BjB** : Shayne, that's a difficult question...

**ElissaM** : You know i am not totally clear on that because we just got the program this week so it is very new.

**BjB** : because some kids 'find their voice' online and some become very shy

**BjB** . o O ( completely different than they are in f2f discussions )

**BjB** : this is also true of adults, though

**MarciaBe** : I like that shy students can blossom online. Asynchronous does give them more time to think through their answers.

**JiaYuL** : yes, those who are shy also want to participate "in another way"

**LaurenWB** : I would try to emphasize the depth of answers/comments, not necessarily how many times they post during the chat

**LaurenWB** : so the kids who are shy don't feel they have to post every other second

**MarciaBe** : I like that Lauren. Measure what matters.

**BjB** : I think that the most valuable use of the K-12 student campus is that it teaches children to be accountable in online behaviors

**MarciaBe** : That's an excellent point, BJ

**JiaYuL** : agree..

**ElissaM** : online etiquette

**BjB** : we can filter up the wazoo, but when the kids get home they don't have that artificial control

**BjB** nods to Elissa

**LaurenWB** : cyberbullying is also a problem

**BjB** agrees with Lauren

**LaurenWB** : so a teacher would need to proctor the chat

**LaurenWB** : at the very least

**ElissaM** : That's why a teacher would need to sit in on the discussion and make sure that

it stays on topic

**RaymondG:** The only thing I'm seeing as a problem is the fact that these children, once on their own and in the work force won't be given the option to do their work solely online. How will doing their work online aid in their development as a future member of the workforce

**BjB:** so we're assessing behavior as well as information

**RaymondG:** shy students will be forced to speak up

**BjB:** Marcia, do you have an answer for Raymond?

**MarciaBe:** There is a lot of work done online. Their written communication skills are important in most jobs.

**RaymondG:** I know I worded it incorrectly

**ElissaM:** doing their work online will help them especially since everything is technology focused

**MarciaBe:** Global virtual teams exist in the workplace,.

**BjB:** email and wikis are being used more and more as inter office communication

**ShayneTr:** We can structure their participation through different tools - if they create a wiki they don't the same pressure as participating in a chat.

**RaymondG:** I personally am shy but I know I grew out of it by being forced on a stage and giving speeches or acting a play

**BjB** nods to Shayne...same thing with the discussion boards in the student campus

**MarciaBe:** I agree, Shayne. If they don't think and type quickly, they probably won't want to participate real time.

**LukeAH:** I agree...wikis are more beneficial to differentiated efforts

**ShayneTr:** I've been trying to provide differentiation in my classroom as I have a huge range of special needs

**MarciaBe:** I'm sure if we allowed text message spelling they might participate more :-)

**LaurenWB:** lol

**LaurenWB:** this English teacher wouldn't be able to allow that ;)

**KimMB:** What is a wiki?

**ElissaM:** Well I think that these programs also offer assignments such as a quiz or practices on topics so that they wouldn't have to attend a discussion

**BjB** waits for someone to explain wiki to Kim

**JeffC:** wikis are collaborative websites.

**ShayneTr:** Most famous one is Wikipedia

**KimMB:** Oh. Thanks.

**ShayneTr:** anyone can create a page, add to it, edit it.

**ShayneTr:** pbwiki is great for educational use

**MarciaBe:** I think a key component is to work backwards from our desired goals, our assessments - or how will they demonstrate they know, and then what and how we'll teach that which we want them to know as Maryann's files suggest.

**JeffC:** although you can make it so that members only may edit... the owner may also easily revert edits to a previous state.

**LaurenWB:** constructivism!

**BjB:** collaboration

**JeffC:** there's A K12 Wiki group here which you may join if you'd like to learn more (and get support with doing your own wiki).

**MarciaBe:** Stephen Covey says begin with the end in mind.

**BjB:** [http://blogs.edweek.org/teachers/new\\_terrain/](http://blogs.edweek.org/teachers/new_terrain/)

**BjB:** that url is a link here in this group room

**BjB:** Maryann also has some files that may be of interest to you for more information about assessment...

**MarciaBe:** I've tried some collaborative mindmaps that were good, too.

**BjB:** but I think you all have a pretty good idea about the topic!

**BjB:** thank you all for your active participation in this discussion...

**BjB** : I assess you all with gold stars!

**RaymondG**: great discussion Bj

**MarciaBe**: Thank you all and good night.

**LaurenWB** : thanks for taking over

**BjB** applauds the participants...good job, everyone :-)

**ElissaM**: Thanks for all the great ideas!

**BjB** : I know I learned a lot from the discussion

**LukeAH**: thanks all. first timer w/ this and it was interesting

**BjB** waves bye and heads for the teachers in training discussion